

# FATALITY



AFZF-GA-SAFE

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
**HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD**  
**FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056**



8 April 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: POV Accident Fatality/Prevention -- Fatality Memo 02-09

1. This past weekend, less than a week after our last POV fatality, another III Corps soldier perished in a POV accident - our ninth POV fatality for FY02. What makes this latest tragedy even more terrible is that the soldier's spouse also died in the accident. The spouse, who was driving, made a left turn across a highway median and struck another POV when entering the opposite lane. The collision resulted in the death of this III Corps family and caused serious injuries to the occupants of the other vehicle. Police surmise that the spouse missed a highway exit and attempted to cross into the opposite lane by driving across the grassy highway median, instead of going to the next exit. The police report reflected that the soldier did not wear his seat belts. The exact factors leading up to this terrible accident may never be known. However, so that this awful loss was not in vain, let me use this unfortunate case as backdrop to share some POV safety thoughts.

2. Whether we consciously think about it or not, every time we ride as passenger with another driver, in essence, we put our fate in the hands of that driver. Ironically, without much thought sometimes, we trust our lives to the buddy who frequently drives recklessly, flagrantly violates traffic rules, and even drives under the influence. Under the right conditions, this same buddy's reckless behavior can cause an accident resulting in his/her and your injury or fatality. To be good buddies, we need to influence the drivers in a positive way to make them aware of their unsafe driving habits.

3. Peers and first line leaders normally know who these unsafe drivers are. Commanders must charge their leaders to step up to the plate and provide appropriate remedial actions / counseling to known habitually unsafe soldiers. Since junior leaders usually know who their problem drivers are, they should be the heavy hitters in this effort to positively influence soldiers with bad driving habits. Check your POV safety programs to ensure that they are on target to reach not just the good soldiers/drivers; but, also the problem drivers. This might require some thinking outside of the traditional POV safety box. Extraordinary challenges require extraordinary actions. Have your leaders review III Corps & Fort Hood Reg. 190-5 for remedial drivers training ideas. Incorporate your whole command family, including dependents, in POV safety training. Family members are authorized to attend our Defensive Driving Course which is an excellent source for teaching safe driving practices. Use safety stand-downs to reach family members too with your safety messages.

4. With a concerted effort, peers and leaders can turn unsafe behavior around and make it an unacceptable part of military life. I charge commanders and leaders with this noble endeavor to effectively protect our most valuable resources - our soldiers and family members.

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B. B. BELL  
Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

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